



## **Food Banks Canada reports record number of Canadians using food banks; 38% are children**

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### **NEWS RELEASE**

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*HungerCount 2012* provides essential information on levels of food bank use in Canada, profiles communities hit by economic change

**Ottawa, October 30, 2012** – The number of Canadians turning to food banks for help is at an all-time high, according to the *HungerCount 2012* national study released today by Food Banks Canada.

After dipping slightly in 2011, food bank use in Canada increased by 2.4% this year, and is now a staggering 31% higher than before the 2008-2009 recession.

The *HungerCount 2012* report highlights that in a typical month, food banks across the country provide food to more than three quarters of a million separate individuals – 882,000 people – and more than 339,000 (38%) of those helped are children.

“It is shocking that, in a country as prosperous as Canada, hundreds of thousands of children rely on food banks to have enough to eat each month,” said Katharine Schmidt,

Executive Director of Food Banks Canada, which coordinated the national study involving more than 4,500 food assistance programs. “Though food banks do what they can to fill the need, too many kids are still going to school on empty stomachs.”

“Hunger saps you physically and emotionally, particularly if you don’t know where your next meal is coming from,” continued Schmidt. “It has negative long-term health impacts, and prevents Canadians from contributing to their full potential.”

The *HungerCount 2012* study also found that:

11% of those receiving food each month – 93,000 people – are accessing a food bank for the first time.

1 in 5 households assisted by food banks have income from current or recent employment.

21% of households helped are living on an old age or disability pension.

Half of households receiving food are families with children.

The *HungerCount 2012* report provides recommendations to federal and provincial governments that, if implemented, will make significant progress in reducing the number of people who need help from food banks. Recommendations include:

***Investing in affordable housing*** so that low income Canadians don’t have to make the difficult choice between paying the rent or feeding their families.

***Creating a federal Northern Food Security Innovation Fund***, to help address the unacceptably high levels of household food insecurity in the territories.

***Improving the Guaranteed Income Supplement*** so that no senior in Canada lives in poverty.

For a full copy of the *HungerCount 2012* report, visit [www.foodbankscanada.ca](http://www.foodbankscanada.ca).

Go to <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/hungercount/id567779411?ls=1&mt=8>, to get the **HungerCount app** for iPhone and iPad.

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